

By Partisanship by Dan Jacoby

It took almost two months, but I think I've figured out the reason behind George W. Bush's rhetoric since he got "trampled" in the last election.

First, it's important to note that his rhetoric hasn't changed. He is still adamant about making things worse in Iraq. He is still unable or unwilling to discuss going after the man he once "Wanted, Dead or Alive." He still wants to give billions of dollars we don't have to people who don't need it, and he still calls that a method for balancing the budget.

Meanwhile, he refuses to accept that there is a new sheriff in town. Nancy Pelosi may not wear a shiny badge, but she's done measuring the drapes. Tomorrow, she begins "draining the swamp" and starts showing what she's made of. It's looking like it will be a showdown that will make the OK Corral seem like a tea party.

George W. Bush's party lost both houses of Congress. In addition, Democrats picked up four Governors and hundreds of state legislators. There was all that talk of bringing the political parties together to find practical solutions to the grave problems that beset us.

Despite the topline numbers, our economy is limping along, creating too few jobs to make up for the growing numbers of work-age Americans. The official unemployment rate may be low, but that's because it doesn't include the five million Americans who have dropped out of the job market. Median income – the amount the average American makes – has fallen far behind inflation. More and more Americans are losing health care coverage, and losing their homes as foreclosures hit record highs.

The grand attempt to fix education has resulted in looming catastrophe. The plethora of standardized tests interferes with teachers' attempts to teach students anything useful. Instead, they must teach their students how to take standardized tests. Property taxes are hitting unreasonably high levels in order to pay for this colossal waste of time.

Then there's the interminable occupation of Iraq. Clearly, "stay the course" is a failed option. The President's own Iraq Study Group recommends getting out as soon as practicable. Yet Bush responds with escalation, preparing to send tens of thousands more Americans into harm's way with no goal and no end in sight.

How could George W. Bush have gone from trampled back to arrogant so quickly?

I propose an explanation that is as simple as Bush's thought processes appear to be. Instead of hearing that it was a time for bi-partisanship, he believed that he was told to get things done "by partisanship."

Perhaps he heard it from his nuclear family.